



## Question Stems for Comprehension Conversations

These question stems can be used to generate questions for your comprehension conversations. They have been arranged under the reading skills identified in the Oxford Reading Criterion Scale Standards.

The reading skills are:

R = recall and retrieval

E = exploring the author's language and point of view

A = analysis of structure and organisation

D = deduction and inference

This is not an exhaustive list of potential questions but it can be used as a starting point for teachers. It does not include pointers for general reading behaviours as these will usually be observed by the teacher in the course of the reading session, rather than prompted by specific questions. It does not include pointers for word reading as these will usually be very specific to the text.

### Questions stems for Retrieve (fiction)

- Where/when does the story take place?
- What did he/ she/it look like?
- Who was...?
- Can you name the...?
- Who was the character that...?
- Show me where in the text you found...?
- Who are the characters in the book?
- Read/write down the part that tells the reader about...
- What happened before/after...?
- Find one/two things that the main character did.
- Who did... speak to when...?

R

### Questions stems for Retrieve (non-fiction)

- Where can you find an important piece of information about...?
- Find two pieces of information that tell you about...?
- What does this part of the text tell us about...?
- Would it be true/false to say...?
- Show me where in the text you found...

### Questions stems for Explore (fiction)

- How has the author used words/phrases to make this character funny/sad/ adventurous/clever/frightening/excited/disappointed/etc.?
- What does/do this/these words tell you about...? (character/setting etc.)
- Which part of the story best describes the setting/characters/action? Which words and/or phrases do this?
- Find words or phrases that show us that this character is special/helpful/ adventurous/unsure/worried etc.
- Do you notice anything special or unusual about the words the poet/ author has used here?
- What do these two stories/poems they have in common?

E



- When do you think this story/poem was written? How do you know?
- Does the setting remind you of a setting you know from another story /poem?
- Which words/images in particular remind you of...?
- Many traditional tales have messages. What do you think this story is trying to tell us?
- How did the story make you feel? Why did it make you feel like this?
- How has the author started this in an interesting way? How does this make the reader want to read on?
- Do you know of any other texts with similar issues or themes?

## Questions stems for Explore (non-fiction)

- What do these words tell you about...?
- Which word(s)/phrases/types of sentences are used well in this text...?
- Is this writer an expert on...? How do you know?
- Why do you think the writer chose to use the word(s)/phrase(s)
- Find something that is the author's opinion, not a fact.
- What does the writer think about ...in this part of the text?
- Why do you think the writer produced this article/leaflet/flyer/brochure etc.?
- How does the writer try to persuade you to...?
- Which information/facts does the writer include to make you believe that...?
- Which words/points do you think are the strongest/most powerful in persuading the reader to...?
- Which advert/text would most persuade you to buy/take part in...? Why?
- The writer says... Do you agree or disagree? Why?

## Questions stems for Analyse (fiction)

- How has the author organized the writing?
- Why does the author begin a new paragraph here?
- How does the author link these paragraphs together?
- How does the author link this chapter to the next/previous one?
- How does the layout of this play help actors to read and perform the play?
- Why are brackets used in this text?
- How does the punctuation help you as the reader of this text?
- Can you find any repeated patterns in this poem?
- Has the author used an unusual layout in the text? If so, describe it and explain why it has been done in this way.
- How do longer and stronger sentences change the pace of the story?

## Questions stems for Analyse (non-fiction)

- How do headings help you when you scan a text?
- What do the headings describe?
- If you wanted to find out about... how could you do it?
- If you can't find information in the Contents page, where else could you look?
- Why are particular words/sections within a text in bold/italics/larger print?
- Why have bullet points/numbers been used in this text?



- How does this text layout help the reader?
- How does (a diagram/picture/caption) help you to understand the information on this/these pages?
- What is the purpose of the list/diagram/caption/sub-headings in this text?
- What is the same about them about these two texts and what is different?
- What would be a good heading for this section? Why?
- Which illustrations/instructions/texts are the easiest to follow? Why?
- How could you adapt this... for older/younger pupils?
- What are the main ideas in this paragraph and how are they related?
- Which idea in this paragraph is linked to an idea in the next paragraph?
- Find three ways in which you can identify that this text has been written as a recount/a report/etc.

## Questions stems for Deduce and Infer (fiction)

- How did...feel?
  - Why did...feel/think?
  - Match feelings throughout the story.
  - How did his/her feelings change?
  - How do we know...?
  - Have you ever had a similar experience? How did you feel?
  - Who do you know who is like ...?
  - What happened in this part of the story? What might this mean?
  - What do you think will happen because of ...?
  - What do you think might happen next? What makes you think that?
  - What do we know about this character ....? (Caitlyn stomped to school, not wanting to hold her mother's hand.)
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- How might the ending have changed if...?
  - What were the motives behind...? How do you know?
  - What assumptions have you made and why?
  - What evidence do you have? Justify your answer.
  - Why was...important in this story/play?
  - How did the characters help each other in this story/play?
  - Tell me/write about what sort of character/person...was from the things they did/said in the story/play.
  - In an interview with a character, which questions would you ask and why?
  - How did one of the characters change their ideas/attitudes?

## Questions stems for Deduce and Infer (non-fiction)

- Can you explain why...?
- How do you know that this text is trying to tell you more about...?
- How do you feel about this topic? Why?
- What do you think about/is your opinion of...? Can you support your view?
- What are the important points the author is trying to get over?
- Which do you think are the most important issues and why?

